

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Period: \_\_\_\_\_

### Poetry HW Packet

Complete the following check lists as you read the two poems, "Seeds" and "The Farmer". When answering the multiple choice questions about each poem, you must give text evidence out to the side of you answer. Check off each step as you complete it.

#### Close Reading Check List for "Seeds"-

- Read the Poem
- Number the lines of your poem
- Circle the words that rhyme. Is there a pattern?
- Is there a refrain? Underline the refrain
- Look for imagery. Draw a box around any words that appeal to the five senses.
- Look for Figurative Language. Highlight any examples of metaphors, similes, personification, onomatopoeia, etc.
- Out to the side of the poem, make a note of anything that is interesting, surprises you or that you have questions about.
- Determine the theme of the poem and write it at the bottom of the poem
- Answer the questions the multiple choice questions and the short answer questions about "Seeds". Make sure to give evidence out to the side of the question on how you know that is the correct answer.

#### Close Reading Check List for "The Farmer"-

- Read the Poem
- Number the lines of your poem
- Circle the words that rhyme. Is there a pattern?
- Is there a refrain? Underline the refrain
- Look for imagery. Draw a box around any words that appeal to the five senses.
- Look for Figurative Language. Highlight any examples of metaphors, similes, personification, onomatopoeia, etc.
- Out to the side of the poem, make a note of anything that is interesting, surprises you or that you have questions about.
- Determine the theme of the poem and write it at the bottom of the poem
- Answer the questions the multiple choice questions and the short answer questions about "Seeds". Make sure to give evidence out to the side of the question on how you know that is the correct answer.

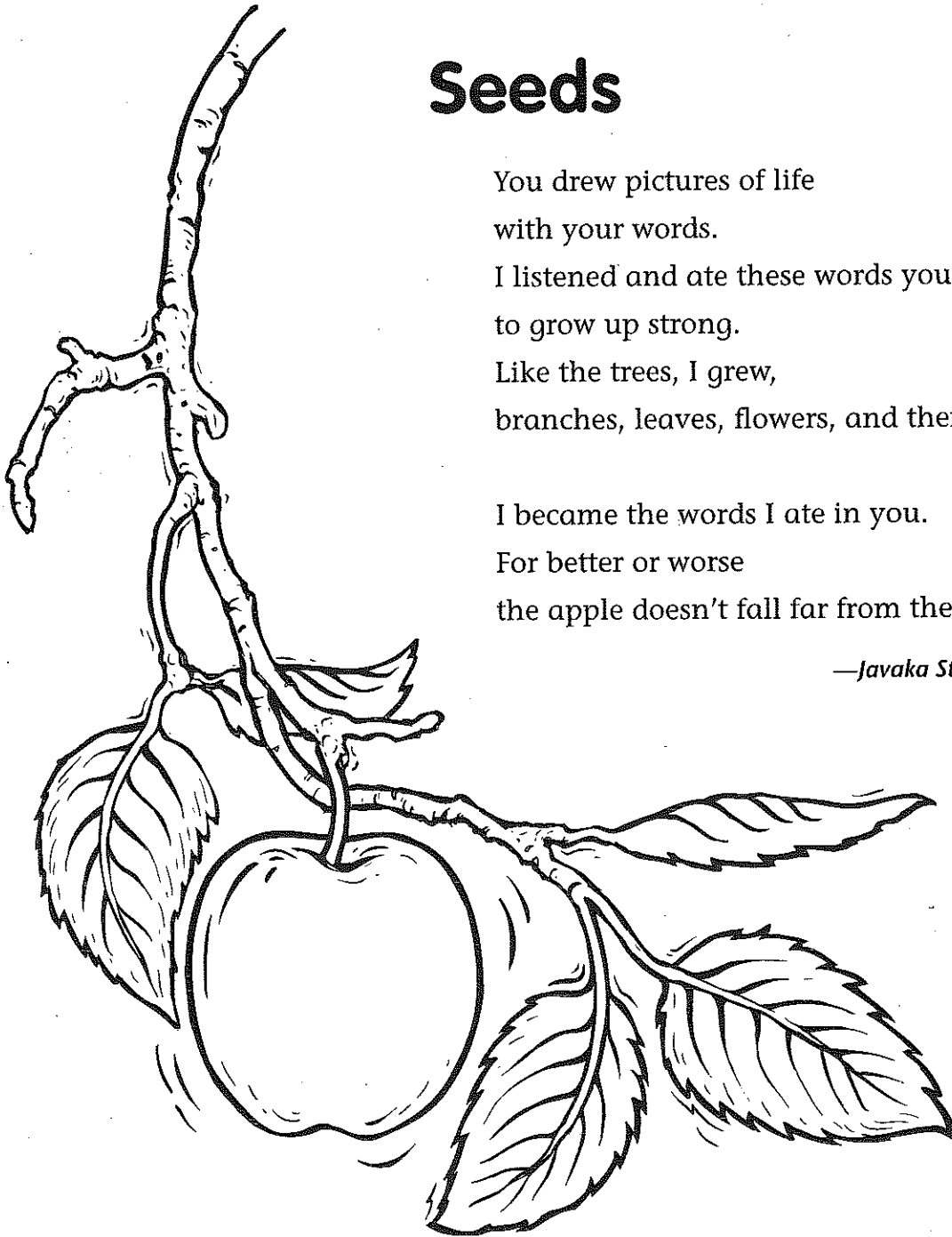
# Seeds

You drew pictures of life  
with your words.

I listened and ate these words you said  
to grow up strong.  
Like the trees, I grew,  
branches, leaves, flowers, and then the fruit.

I became the words I ate in you.  
For better or worse  
the apple doesn't fall far from the tree.

—Javaka Steptoe



**Did You Know?** The poetry collection *In Daddy's Arms I Am Tall: African Americans Celebrating Fathers* was the first book illustrated by Javaka Steptoe. His poem, "Seeds," also appeared in that anthology. The subject was close to Javaka's heart, as his own father was John Steptoe, award-winning author and illustrator of works such as *Mufaro's Beautiful Daughters*. In this case, the apple fell pretty close to the tree.

## Understanding the Poem

Read each question and choose the best answer. You may wish to reread "Seeds" as you work.

1. In the poem, the speaker is probably talking to \_\_\_\_\_.
  - (A) a dog
  - (B) a tree
  - (C) a parent
  - (D) an apple
2. Which of these is mentioned first in the poem?
  - (A) fruit
  - (B) trees
  - (C) words
  - (D) pictures
3. The saying "the apple doesn't fall far from the tree" probably means that \_\_\_\_\_.
  - (A) fallen apples should be picked up right away
  - (B) children grow up to be like their parents
  - (C) children are very much like apples
  - (D) apples split open when they fall
4. This poem is not about \_\_\_\_\_.
  - (A) growing up
  - (B) apple recipes
  - (C) a parent and child
  - (D) the power of words
5. In this poem, what does the speaker use to draw pictures?
  - (A) words
  - (B) pencils
  - (C) crayons
  - (D) branches
6. In which way are the speaker and the parent the same?
  - (A) They both work in an apple orchard.
  - (B) They both draw pictures with words.
  - (C) They both like to eat lots of apples.
  - (D) They are both watercolor painters.

# Understanding the Poem

1. Remember that a simile compares two things by using the words *like* or *as*. Write a simile from "Seeds" below.

\_\_\_\_\_

2. Remember that a metaphor compares two things without using the words *like* or *as*. Write the metaphor used in "Seeds" to describe the act of speaking.

\_\_\_\_\_

3. Match each idiom in the left column with its meaning.

The apple doesn't fall far from the tree.

What's eating you?

He ate his words.

for better or worse

Mighty oaks from tiny acorns grow.

Children grow into adults.

What's bothering you?

whether good or bad

Children are like their parents.

He admitted his mistake.

4. In the last stanza, before observing that "the apple doesn't fall far from the tree," the speaker says, "For better or worse." Why do you think that phrase is included?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

5. When a thought does not stop at the end of a line but continues into the next line, it is called *enjambement*. When the thought begins and ends in the same line, the line has an *end stop*. Reread "Seeds," then write *enjambement* or *end stop* after each line below.

a. You drew pictures of life

\_\_\_\_\_

b. with your words.

\_\_\_\_\_

c. I listened and ate these words you said

\_\_\_\_\_

d. to grow up strong.

\_\_\_\_\_

e. Like the trees, I grew,

\_\_\_\_\_

f. branches, leaves, flowers, and then the fruit.

\_\_\_\_\_

g. I became the words I ate in you.

\_\_\_\_\_

h. For better or worse

\_\_\_\_\_

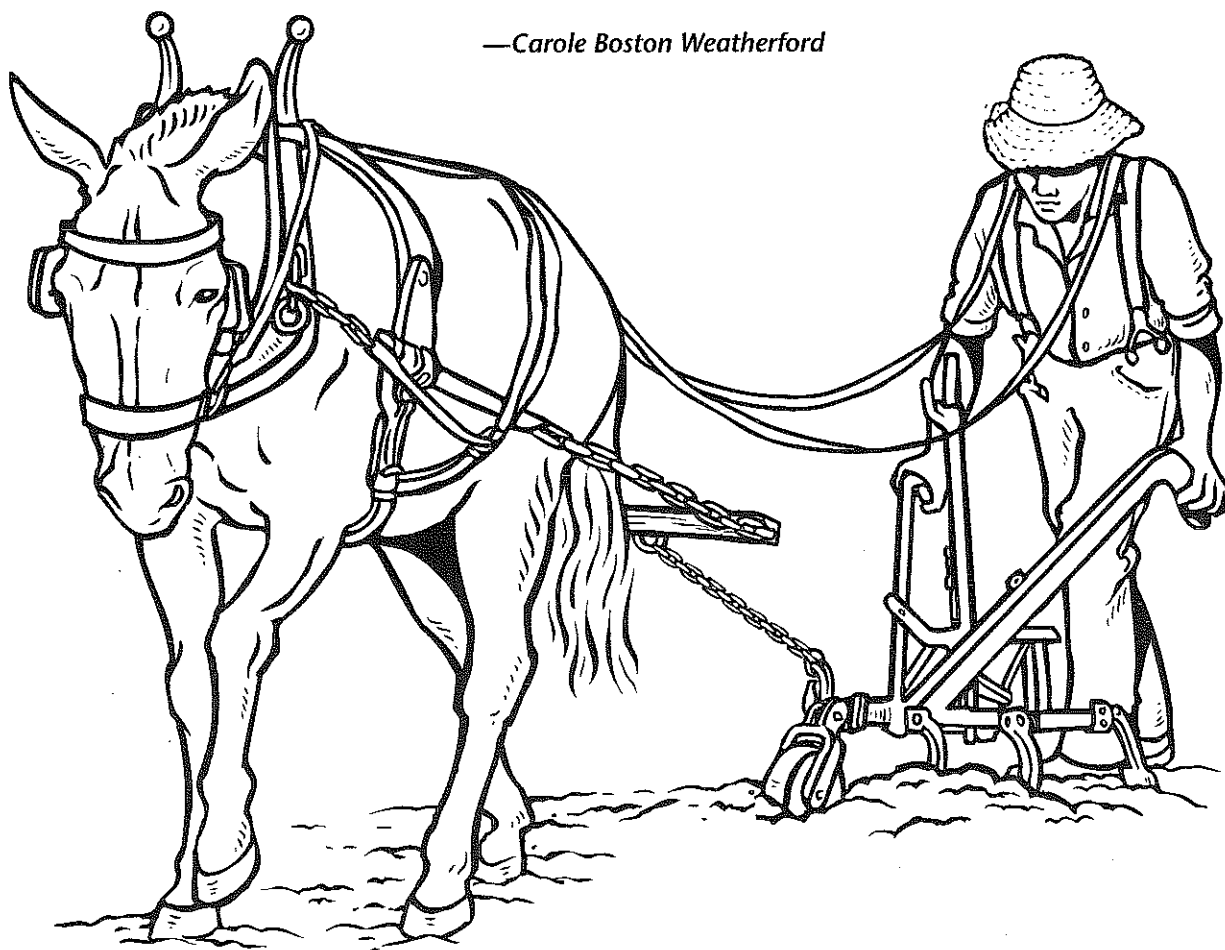
i. the apple doesn't fall far from the tree.

\_\_\_\_\_

# The Farmer

A plot of weeds,  
an old grey mule.  
Hot sun and sweat  
on a bright Southern day.  
Strong, stern papa  
under a straw hat,  
plowing and planting  
his whole life away.  
His backbone is forged  
of African iron  
and red Georgia clay.

—Carole Boston Weatherford



## Understanding the Poem

Read each question and choose the best answer. You may wish to reread "The Farmer" as you work.

1. Where does this poem take place?
  - (A) California
  - (B) Georgia
  - (C) Maine
  - (D) Ohio
2. Which of these is mentioned first in the poem?
  - (A) the farm
  - (B) the heat
  - (C) the work
  - (D) the mule
3. A *plot* is probably \_\_\_\_\_.
  - (A) a farmhouse
  - (B) a kind of plow
  - (C) a piece of land
  - (D) a farm machine
4. This poem is not about \_\_\_\_\_.
  - (A) cotton
  - (B) strength
  - (C) a farmer
  - (D) hard work
5. Which of these words best describes the farmer in the poem?
  - (A) rich
  - (B) lazy
  - (C) weary
  - (D) strong
6. What does the farmer do in his spare time?
  - (A) He paints pictures.
  - (B) He makes straw hats.
  - (C) He has no spare time.
  - (D) He can't decide what to do.

## Understanding the Poem

1. Some words have more than one meaning. Write the word in the poem that fits each pair of meanings below.

a storyline  
a piece of land

to smooth out wrinkles  
a type of metal

the back end of a ship  
serious

2. The first four lines of "The Farmer" set the scene. In your own words, tell where the farmer is, what the weather is like, and who is with him.

3. The first seven lines of "The Farmer" create a picture of the scene in the poem by listing various elements. Read the following list and cross out any items that are not "shown" in the poem.

- a. a father wearing a straw hat
- b. a man plowing with a mule
- c. an old rusty tractor
- d. rustling rows of cornstalks
- e. a hot sun blazing in the sky
- f. a field that needs plowing
- g. a broken-down shack
- h. giraffes, rhinos, and lions
- i. an African American farmer
- j. a man serious about his work

4. In the last three lines of the poem, the narrator says, "His backbone is forged of African iron and red Georgia clay." *Backbone* is a word often used to describe courage and strength. What is the narrator saying about the farmer's character?